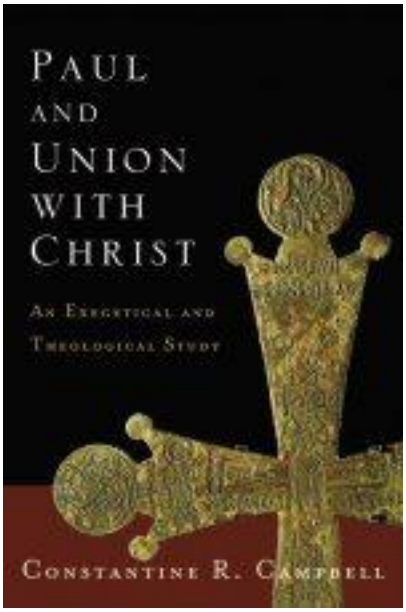

Constantine Campbell, *Paul and Union With Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 2012.

Many years ago I read Adolph Schlatter's *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament* and was amazed at the depth of detail he was able to provide for a term which so many use and which so few, nevertheless, misunderstand. In the preface to the second edition of that book Schlatter tells the story of the little old woman who met Schlatter one day after a Church service and announced to him that though she had been a Christian all her life, she had never fully understood the term 'faith' until she finished his book.

That, I think, is how many will react when they have finished Campbell's book *Union with Christ*. They may have used the phrases 'in Christ' or 'with Christ' or 'through Christ' all their lives and yet did not really understand the fullness and the richness of those phrases until they put Campbell's volume down when they reached page 444.

Campbell meticulously, methodically, carefully, and purposefully takes readers through the exceptionally difficult concepts embodied in Paul's idiosyncratic phrasing in such a way that one feels guided by the hand through the jungle of concepts.

In chapter one, C. introduces the subject and offers readers his methodology. In chapter two he surveys the literature offering little less than a 'Rezeptionsgeschichte' of Paul's terminology though he mysteriously and inexplicably overlooks the work of Adolph Schlatter on the subject. All the rest are there: Deissmann, Schweitzer, Bultmann, Barth, Davis, Sanders, and many more- yet neither mention nor reference to Schlatter is proffered. This, to my mind, is akin to discussing 20th century systematic theology without referencing Brunner or Barth. John Murray and Richard Gaffin are discussed, but Schlatter isn't? It's most peculiar.

Chapter three is the commencement of the exegetical heart of the book and here Campbell shows himself a master of the material and a gifted communicator. His discussion of the phrase εν χριστω is over 130 pages in length, which gives you some idea of his thoroughness. Chapter four is Campbell's treatment of εις χριστον, chapter five συν χριστω, chapter six δια χριστου, and in chapter seven 'Metaphors'.

The eighth and following chapters are the 'theological' segment of the book (remember the subtitle: *An Exegetical and Theological Study*). So, in chapter 8- 'Union With Christ and the Work of Christ'; 9- Union With Christ and the Trinity; 10- Union With Christ and Christian Living; 11- Union With Christ and Justification; 12- Defining 'Union With Christ'; and finally, 13- Implications and Future Directions.

Though generally excellent there are problems with Campbell's work. First, readers will be stricken by the infelicitous translation of a phrase from Adolf Deissmann on page 32:

> Just as the air of like, which we breathe, is "in" us and fills us, yet we at the same time live in this air and breathe it, so it is also with the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle Paul: Christ in him, he in Christ.

If that makes no sense to you, you aren't alone. I very much doubt that the underlying German is as odd and it would have been very helpful had Campbell included in his footnote the actual German used so that we could see for ourselves what it said.

The second problem has already been mentioned: a failure to make use of the work of Adolph Schlatter or even to mention it at all. To be sure, in a footnote on page 31 Campbell rightly notes

> It is not possible to survey every significant contributor here, but those included define the parameters of the field in a way that sets the scene for the ensuing discussion.

He's right- one can't name everyone and discuss their contributions; but surely and most certainly, Schlatter's absence is glaring in light of the inclusion of lesser folk like Bouttier and Neugebauer. But perhaps this says more about my own inclinations than it does Campbell's. Nonetheless, the absence of Schlatter is jarring.

Finally, the third problem with Campbell's work is that it may presume too much of its readers. I.e., it presumes throughout that readers read Greek. Greek fonts are used and in spite of that English translations of Greek passages are included, which raises the following questions: if readers read Greek, why do they need an English translation of the Greek text; and if they don't read Greek, what use is the copious inclusion of Greek material?

Those three reservations aside, Campbell has managed something spectacular. He takes some of the most difficult theological concepts in the entire New Testament and makes them both comprehensible and, best, applicable. The heart of the book is the exegetical material but the soul of the book is the third part, the theological. Campbell demonstrates that exegesis without theological application is pointless and theological application based on anything other than explicit and meticulous exegetical work is foundationless and thereby useless.

This may well turn out to be the sort of book little old ladies read and from which they are graced with that ever evasive 'ahah' moment. It certainly provided this reviewer with many, many such moments, for which I thank its author.

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